establishment, we find another type of hut reminiscent of the type found north of Lake Leopold II. The base is rectangular, but the front half forms an open veranda or one closed [47] at the sides. The interior of the hut is square. The roof is arched, with a more or less pronounced curve. After first having cleaned, beaten, and prepared the interior area, the native traces the outline of his hut and erects on the perimeter and the median line the supports for the main rafters. The central stake is 50 to 75 centimeters higher than those placed at the two ends. The latter are, on the average, one meter higher than the stakes of the lateral walls. The three stakes of the median line are connected by a strong horizontal crosspiece, and a second crosspiece is laid over this. The latter must form an arc. The curve is obtained by attaching very strong lianas to the ends, from

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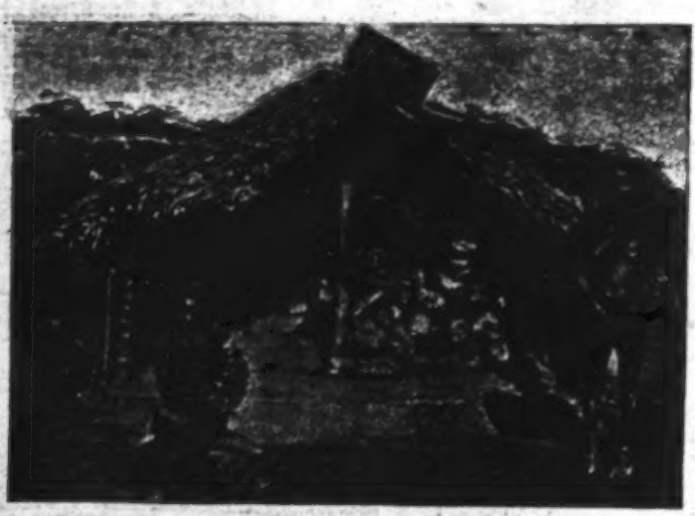

[415]

Fig. 30. View of the Interior of a Ypanga Hut.

which the native suspends very large wooden blocks. The roof is covered with raffia stems bent at dihedral angles and attached to the ridgepole and to the two horizontal crosspieces of the side walls. The spaces between the large wall stakes are filled in with smaller rods that are tied to the horizontal crosspiece. Upon this framework, the native ties raffia stalks, placed horizontally 15 or 20 centimeters apart. The gable walls are built in the

as the roof. The natives of the Bumbuli region usually build their 342
huts quite carelessly. Although their villages are remarkably clean, the general appearance suffers a great deal from the shabby state of most of the dwellings. Even quite new huts are poorly finished, compared to those of other regions.

The furnishings of Batitu and Yaelima huts do not differ from 352
those of other regions, except in the shape of the utensils and the presence of chairs. The bed is always very low, raised barely 10 or 15 centimeters from the ground. The interior of the hut is only very rarely lined with mats. Among the furnishings one should [415] note the large drying basket which serves as a storage place and which is hung above the hearth. It is hexagonal in shape, and

Fig. 33. Temporary Hut of the Bokala-Yaelima.

its radius varies from one to one and a half meters. Its edges are straight, the thongs by which it hangs are attached to the six corners of the hexagon, and it is made entirely in an open-work weave like that [50] of the caned chairs of Europe, a special technique of which we found no other instances in the region. No less interesting are the chairs, relatively rare among the Batitu, common among the Bokala, and in daily use among the Yaelima. Their special form is characteristic. The natives 352 sometimes take the utmost care to ornament them with carved 351 designs, and the remarkably artistic appearance of certain ones

Yaelima
Wamba

give them in general a very interesting local ethnic character. One might say as much of the carved wooden cups, the engraved horns, and the vessels of artistically worked wood which up to now have been regarded as local to the region occupied by the Bakuba [Kuba] and which we found throughout the territory south of Wumbuli.

As a rule, the hut of the Bena Dibele-Kole region is much trimmer, it is constructed much more carefully, and the work is accomplished with order and method. The shape is rectangular, the roof has a double slope, and the ridgepole is slightly arched. This curve, however slight, is nevertheless quite characteristic

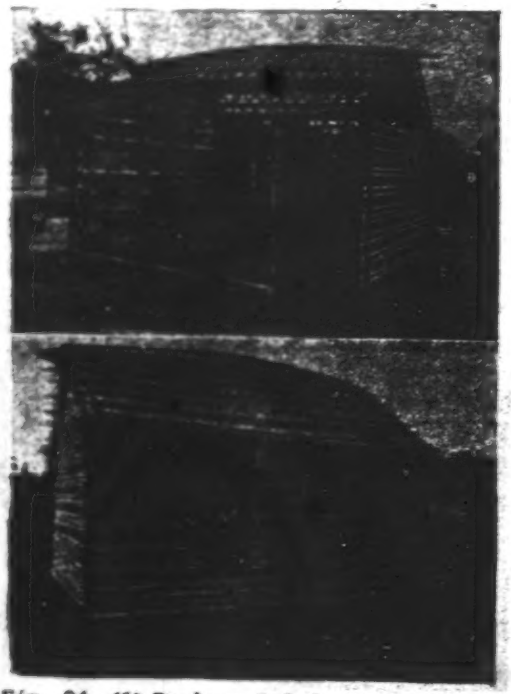

Fig. 34. (1) Bankutu-Bakuba Hut under Construction.
(2) Completed Bankutu-Bankuba Hut.

and quite constant. It is undeniably reminiscent of the typical form of the ancestral hut.

The door is located either on the side or in the gable wall, according to whether the hut is oriented parallel or perpendicular to

M S 258 [834] 462 M S 258 [285] 462

sexual relations are strictly forbidden between the head of the family and the woman in charge of the burning.

When the last sprig is burned, the fire extinguished, and the ashes cold, the women heap them in large baskets.

Meanwhile the head of the family has made a sort of large funnel out of broad and tough rattan splints, bound with fine thongs of raffia stems and lianas. These funnels vary between two and three meters in height. The diameter of the large opening is one and a half to two meters. The bottom is formed by the cluster of rattan splints, roughly tied with a broad rattan thong. This funnel is placed upright between three or four sticks planted in the ground. An earthenware jar is placed under the funnel. The women line the inside of the funnel with banana leaves, placed on top of each other in such a way as to make the sides completely [109] waterproof. They next pour the ashes from the incineration into the funnel, pressing and squeezing them as much as possible.

When the funnel is three-fourths full, the woman draws about ten pots of water, or about 50 liters, and pours them over the ashes. This water takes two or sometimes three days to spread through the ashes. When the ashes are saturated, the woman pours two or three more pots of water into the funnel. From then on there is a slow drain of water, strongly salted from the dissolution of the soluble alkaline matter contained in the ashes. The water is caught in the earthenware jar under the funnel. The woman thus obtains four or five pots of a strong salt solution and two pots of water less saturated with salt. After putting aside her six or seven pots of salt water, the woman lights a fire and puts one or several earthenware bowls over it. Into these, little by little, she pours the strong salt solution, which she allows to boil.

When the water evaporates, the first salt deposit forms on the bottom and sides of the bowl.

M S [415]

The heat from these evaporation hearths is so intense that it is impossible to come near them. The woman therefore carefully provides herself with two long ladles to refill the bowls at a distance as the evaporation progresses. The whole lot is left on the fire until all the salt water is evaporated. Even after the evaporation is completed, the woman leaves the jar over the fire, which she stokes, so as to completely dry and solidify the salt deposit. This

258 476 flowers of palm trees are not sufficiently abundant to permit exploitation on a large scale. The women scarcely manage to gather enough material to make the salt needed for everyday life. The whole village takes part in the harvest. The incineration and extraction of the salt is done in the village by the process we have just described, but the product is divided among all the families in proportion to the number of their respective members. The quantity available is usually so small that it is barely sufficient for daily needs; hence the value of salt here is notably higher than among the peoples of the regions where salt grass is abundant. [Ed., the text is not translated from the second paragraph, page 115, to the end of the section, page 118.]

[115]

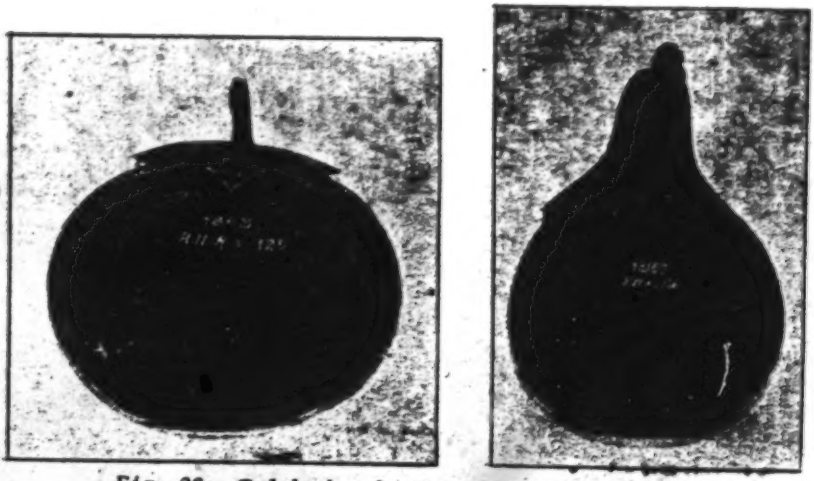

Fig. 66. Calabashes for Salt, Lake Leopold II.

[118] Preparation of Food

262 Manioc may be regarded as the principal food, the dietary staple of all the peoples in the region visited.

From the Bateke of Leopoldville to the Bankutshu of Bena Dibele-Kole, [119] all the tribes cultivate manioc, gather the tubers, soak them, and extract the flour with which they make chikwangue.

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The little sieve-basket has the shape of a large calotte with the rim slightly raised and the bottom plaited in openwork.

The sifted flour is gathered in small baskets, then made into dough, rolled into small cakes, and wrapped in banana or masisa leaves in the way we have just described.

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The chikwangue are cooked in the same way by all the peoples visited.

The woman lays a wooden grid in the bottom of an earthenware cooking pot. She pours in water up to the level of the grid,

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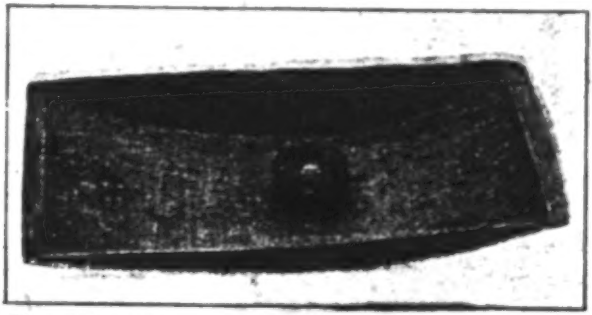

Fig. 69. Mortar with Clay Pestle (Etuti) for Manioc, Banfumu Tribe.

lines the whole inner surface of the pot with banana leaves, and places the cakes or sausages one on top the other. She not only fills the pot, [123] but she piles them well above the rim and covers them with more banana leaves, which are tied together so carefully that the whole thing is hermetically sealed. The pot is placed on the fire for several hours. The chikwangue, then are cooked by the steam.

After being cooked, the manioc dough looks like very heavy bread, amber-colored, very slightly translucent on the edges, and of a rather soft consistency. This is chikwangue, the famous kwanga of the natives which plays the same role in their diet as bread does in ours.

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Although the cooking method is the same everywhere we went, the pottery used for the cooking differs notably from one region to the next.

From Stanley Pool to the Bumbuli region, the natives use a large earthenware vessel, generally with very little decoration on the rough, irregular outside surface which is marked with vertical lines. [124] 415 531

The few specimens we collected are the only ones that the Museum of the Belgian Congo possesses.

The vessel is oval and elongated in shape, and the bottom is rounded off so little that the pottery cannot stand upright on a horizontal surface. The opening at the top is wide. Among the Balesa and Bateke, the rim is slightly raised and tilts sharply, while among the Ipanga and Batitu, the rim is wider, and its slope is less accentuated. The latter pottery, moreover, is very often

252 412 516

Fig. 70. Yaelima Women Preparing Manioc.

decorated with two or three circular, impressed lines. As one advances eastward, the oval shape tends to disappear. The pot becomes spherical, the rim wider, and the impressed decoration more symmetrical and more painstakingly done.

Among the Bokala and Yaelima, the vessels used to cook the chikwangue have a bottom shaped like a spherical calotte, a rather wide, reversed rim, and a neck and body with sharp edges and distinct angles. The impressed decoration consists of two or three circular lines placed immediately above the bend

415 of the body. These parallel lines are intersected in three or four
531 places by small groups of eight to ten little notches. In addition, the part of the body angling inward is quite often decorated with intersecting oblique lines. [125]

415 These types of pottery for chikwangue seem to be modern forms.

The very ancient kind, of which we happily were able to find a specimen still intact, has a less characteristic shape. The bottom is round and irregular; the body is more or less angled but without sharp edges; and the neck is slightly bent back but

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Fig. 71. Mortar, Pestle, and Sifter for Manioc Flour among the Bankutu.

has no distinct plane surface.

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415 The Bokala, Yaelima, etc., place a wooden grid at the bottom of the chikwangue vessel, line the inside with leaves, and pile the cakes of manioc flour in small mounds higher than the rim of the vessel. To keep these characteristic pyramids stable, they often tie a network of cords, a sort of net with large, wide meshes, to the molding of the neck. The top of this net can be opened or closed at will, and the chikwangue cakes are crammed in it as in a net. Sometimes the wooden grid is replaced by an earthenware shelf which extends beyond the rim of the vessel. This shelf is pierced with large round holes. This type of pottery, however, is quite rare. We were able to find only a few specimens.

The natives do not care for them very much; they regard them as impractical for preparing chikwangue, but readily use them to dry and smoke their provisions.

Beyond the Yaelima, notably among the peoples of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, the pottery used to cook manioc cakes [126] is more reminiscent of the old earthenware cooking pots of Europe. It is spheroid in shape, very symmetrical, with the neck curved out a little, rounded, and slightly arched. The upper part of the body is decorated with broad circular lines, small arcs, and little dots. These pots are a mottled brownish-black in color and are lightly glazed.

Here, too, the chikwangue are cooked by steam. It must be noted, however, that chikwangue does not play the same important role in the diet of the peoples of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, although it is still one of the chief elements even now.

The Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu also eat kifunge, a manioc bread which is prepared in the following way. The

Fig. 72. Chikwangue Brought to the Post.

housewife heats water in a large earthenware receptacle with a rounded bottom. It is shaped like a wide, spherical calotte, with the body almost straight, but in any case having sharp edges, and the neck slightly flared but not arched. When the water begins to boil, she throws in the manioc flour a little at a time, stirring constantly with a [127] long spatula of polished wood. When the flour has absorbed practically all the water, the vessel is taken off the fire, and more manioc flour is added while

M T 243 252

Maize gathered before maturity is eaten raw or roasted over a low fire. The ears which are allowed to ripen on the stalk are carefully shelled, the kernels ground in a wooden mortar with a cylindrical pestle, and the flour is winnowed or passed through a sieve.

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The mortar used to make maize flour is made from a section of a tree trunk, with a rectangular opening hollowed in the outer surface and perpendicular to the axis of the trunk. These mortars are very crude, poorly worked, and quite rudimentary. Besides these, one sometimes find others which are better made, small

M [25 ●415 291 854]

Fig. 74. Batitu Women Shelling Maize and Preparing Vegetables.

cubes provided with a lug or a liana. Let us note, however, that among the Banfumu southeast of Tua we found a mortar of similar shape which the natives used to prepare vegetables.

The sieves used for maize flour in this region are also a special type. The sides are made in an open weave. The general form resembles that of a large bottle with a square bottom, cylindrical body, constricted neck, and slightly flared rim.

M T 252

The housewife mixes the maize flour with palm oil to form a somewhat thick dough. She wraps it carefully in leaves and boils it for 10 to 15 minutes. This dish, the mokwol of the Basakata-Mosengere, is served very hot, usually seasoned a little

T M 252

with palm oil and pili-pili pepper. Whenever the opportunity arises, the native adds fish or meat to it. The dish is very highly regarded among all the peoples of the Bateke-Yaelima region, but it should be regarded as a luxury which the family can afford only on special occasions. [129]

M 252 262

The sweet manioc tuber, cooked in ashes, is a more common dish. It is served very hot with slips of manioc greens prepared as vegetables.

Sweet potatoes, which are widespread throughout the region, are peeled, boiled in water, mashed, mixed with palm oil, and served with meat or fish.

Peanuts are eaten boiled or roasted, or sometimes the women crush them raw and mix them with manioc flour or use them instead of palm oil in preparing the meals.

Although the natives eat few vegetables, except yams and sweet potatoes, their diet from time to time includes spinach, native sorrel, small tomatoes, a type of purslane, and leaves of all sorts which the women gather in the forest. The housewife pulverizes them in her small mortar with a cylindrical pestle and stews them over a low fire in small earthenware pots.

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● [145]

Among certain tribes, notably the Bokala and Yaelima, these small pots have an earthenware lid with a small vertical lug, while in other regions the woman covers her pot while it is on the fire with part of a calabash, a piece of bark, or the bottom of an ordinary pot.

Bananas play a major part in the native diet. From Leopoldville to Kole, we found banana trees in all the villages, both near the state posts and far into the interior of the country. Bananas are eaten raw, roasted, stewed, dried in the sun or smoked on grids. Dried bananas are reduced to flour and served as mush with other dishes.

M 262

Meat is greedily devoured by all these peoples, regardless of its origin or condition. The native must content himself with what chance brings him, the game from his hunting, and what the Mundele [Ed., White men] leave for him. The natives do not have enough practical means at their disposal to secure an abundant diet of meat. In the villages of the interior, meat is [130] seldom eaten. The prospect of a good share of meat is enough to get the native to do the hardest kind of work. In the

M 262 course of our journey, our bearers never complained about long marches, heavy loads, or fatigue, as long as they got their ration of one or two kilograms of meat every evening.

M 262 The native is passionately fond of meat, and nothing absolutely nothing, is wasted of the animals killed in hunting. The intestines are especially prized. The natives empty them very hastily and do not hesitate to eat them raw. Most often, however, they cut them into small pieces and boil them in big earthenware pots. The fat is very carefully collected and stored for subsequent use in the preparation of vegetables and sauces. The rest is served with vegetables, chikwangue, kifune, etc.

M T 252 The meat is cut into small pieces, seasoned with a little palm oil, pepper, and salt, and placed on the fire to boil. It is cooked in small pots which also serve as plates.

T 415 Among the western Bateke and Banfumungu (in the region of Tua, Kunzulu, and Kwamouth), these utensils are very similar to bowls in shape. The bottom is round, and the rim is straight, slightly flared or arched, and not very high.

Among the eastern Banfumungu (in the region of Tua and Bokala), on the other hand, these utensils have an altogether different shape, little known up to now: a wide, spherical calotte, whose rim, two or three centimeters wide, is bent inward and shows a distinctly horizontal surface.

S 415 Among the Baboma in the region of Bokala, Wombali, and Mushie, as well as among the western Wadia and Basakata, the rim of these bowls has the same characteristic inward curve, but the sides are much more symmetrical and better finished. Moreover, the shape is slightly different. The bottom is round and very flat; the body is shallow and curved slightly inward; and the rim is turned back in horizontally. [131]

M ●415 The inward curve of the sides of some pottery, terminating in an inward, horizontal rim, is a characteristic that we find again, although much less pronounced, in the bowls used for the same purpose by the Mosengere, Tumba, Bobaie, Basakata, and Balesa. All of these peoples thus seem to have a certain ethnic relationship characterized by this special form of pottery rim. The general shape of the various vessels we gathered in this region,

M
415 however, shows us that aside from this generally uniform character these different tribes each have their own distinctive pottery. In our opinion the latter should be regarded as a derivative from the original form, known and used by the principal ethnic branch of these various peoples. Each of them has modified the original form according to its tastes, its conceptions, and local circumstances and needs, to the point where each people developed a special and characteristic form that retained only two essential elements of the original: the more or less marked curve of the sides, and the inward, horizontal rim.

M
415 Among the Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima, the shape
531 of the small pieces of pottery used for preparing meat is altogether different. Here we find neither a regular curvature of the sides nor an inward, horizontal rim. On the contrary, the bottom is a spherical calotte, the body distinctly angled with a sharp edge, the upper surface decorated with incised drawings, and the rim slightly sloping and curved outward. The decoration is the same as that we noted on the pottery for chikwangue in this region.

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415 Farther east, among the Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu, the
531 shape is again quite different. The sides, which slant obliquely inward and have no rim, meet the round bottom at a sharp angle. They usually have considerable decoration with incised drawings and even some molding in relief.

M
251 To preserve meat, the natives proceed in two different ways.

For small quantities, the meat is cut into pieces weighing from one to three kilograms, impaled on a stick, and roasted over [132] a low fire. This procedure does not give very good results. Meat smoked in this way spoils after five or six days, but this does not keep the native from eating it. "It's the meat and not the smell that I eat," he says, "for after the meal the meat is gone and the smell is still with us!"

To store large quantities, the meat is cut into pieces weighing from half a kilogram to one kilogram and then boiled over a [illegible]k fire for a little less than an hour in rather salty, well-spiced water. The pieces are then smoked on a large grid, usually set up in the center of the village. This grid, made of large rattan stems and green branches, rests on four forked stakes 90 centimeters to 1.20 meters high. A woman keeps a slow fire burning under the

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M 251 grid, which gives off a great deal of smoke. The boiled meat is lightly packed and covered with large banana leaves. It remains on this grid for two or three days. At the end of this time, it is thoroughly smoked, black as coal, dry, and tough, but it keeps almost indefinitely.

The housewife takes her supply and puts it in the storage place inside her hut, where it is safe from the rats, mice, and other marauders which infest the native huts.

Fig. 75. Communal Smoking Apparatus.

M 415 The meat is usually cooked in large earthenware vessels. [133]

Among the Bateke and Banfunumgu, these vessels are shaped like irregular spheres with the top cut off.

Among the Baboma and Basakata, on the other hand, this pottery is cylindrical in form, broad, of moderate height, and has a flat bottom. Among the Bobaie, Balesa, and Batete, the bottom is rounded, broad, and shallow, and it extends into a rather high neck in the shape of a truncated cone, decorated with very even and not very artistic impressed designs. The body has sharp edges, and the small rim has a wide flare. This form is found among the Basakata, although less frequently. It seems to be quite common in the region of the Kundu [Nkundu], northern neighbors of the Bobaie, Balesa, and Batete.

M [531]

M D 415 531 The Ipanga and Yaelima use pottery vessels similar to those they use for making chikwangue, while the Basongo-Meno and

Bankutshu use a bell-shaped form; the bottom is a spherical calotte, the body slightly curved, and the decoration consists of heavy moldings, both sunken and in relief.

These same pots are also used by all these tribes for preparing and cooking fish.

The riparian peoples of the Congo-Kasai-Fimi and of the lower Lukenie, as well as the Wadia and Mosengere of the Boriempe-Lulonga, fish a great deal.

Fish is never eaten raw. The natives boil it or eat it dried or smoked.

To preserve fish, the natives smoke it on large grids similar to those they use for smoking meat.

Certain peoples, notably the tribes of the Fimi and lake region and of the lower Lukenie, also use a special form of pottery, rare and heretofore unknown. We were able to bring back only two specimens, which are fortunately very characteristic. [134]

Fig. 76. Rattan Belt.

This form is open at the base and closed at the top by a large disk pierced with holes. The sides are curved. The diameter of the bottom opening is a little smaller than that of the upper disk. It varies from 45 to 90 centimeters.

This drying pot, called kenge by the natives, is placed on three pieces of wood forming a tripod. Under the tripod, a woman maintains a slow fire of leaves, grass and green wood, which sends thick smoke inside the pot. The gutted fish are placed over the disk. They are left there for four or five days, exposed continually to the action of the fire and smoke. At the end of this time they are sufficiently smoked and dried to keep for several months. Naturally, these pots can be used [135] for preparing and preserving only small quantities of food. They form a part of the native house wife's equipment among these various tribes. She also uses them to smoke chikwangue, to dry bananas, manioc tubers, and ears of maize, and sometimes to smoke meat. The manioc tubers, bananas, ears of maize, and other vegetable

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251 products to be dried are not exposed to heavy smoke, but to a small fire of very dry wood producing a low, hot flame, or, if possible, to the heat given off by a glowing bed of charcoal.

When completely prepared, protected, and wrapped in leaves, the chikwangue are laid above the kenge for six to eight hours, while the housewife maintains a charcoal fire underneath. When dried and smoked in this way, the chikwangue keep a very long time.

Lacking a kenge, a woman sometimes uses a pottery vessel with a flat bottom, pierced with small holes, and vertical sides.

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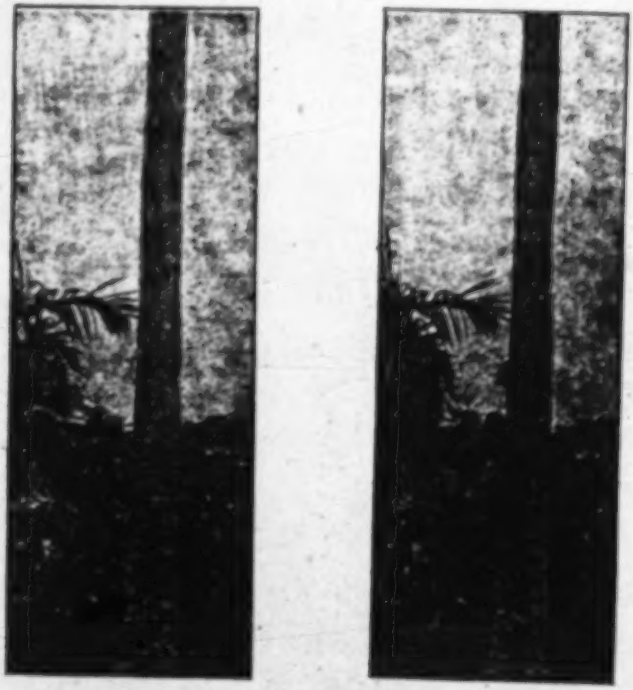

Fig. 77. Two Ways of Climbing Trees.

This fits on top of an old chikwangue pot, mpoko-kepinga, whose bottom has been broken.

The mpoko-kepinga is placed over the fire. The woman seals the juncture between the mpoko-kepinga and the kenge with the pierced bottom, using a paste of clay and potter's earth.

We did not find this particular kind of pottery beyond the Batete area. The Ipanga-Yaelima, as well as the Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu, do not seem to be aware of its existence and, in any case, do not use it. [136]

I come now to the important subject of palm oil. We have already noted how frequently the native housewife uses it in preparing meals. This oil takes the place of the butter and fats used in European cooking. Gathering the clusters of palm nuts and making the oil are very important among all the tribes.

The remarks of Mr. Engels on this subject in his work on the Wangata [Ngata] are applicable to all the peoples we visited.

In each village one or several natives chosen from the nimblest and most daring (the local daredevils) specialize in gathering the clusters from the palm trees. They do this not only for themselves, but also for others for a slight fee.

Gathering these clusters is always somewhat dangerous. The native must climb to the top of palm trees which are sometimes

Fig. 78. Mortar and Pestle for Preparing Vegetables and Palm Oil.

20 to 25 meters high and, once there, must work hard to disentangle and sever the cluster.

The method of climbing varies according to the height of the palm trees. We noted two different procedures among all the tribes visited (see Fig. 77). [137]

If the palm tree is not high, the native climbs to the cluster by using the stubs of cut stems as steps. If the tree is very high, the native uses a rattan belt which encircles both man and tree trunk.

Nothing is more interesting than to watch a native climb up to the crown of a palm tree. He does it with truly extraordinary

252 It consists of a large hole in the form of a truncated cone. The diameter of the upper part varies from 60 to 70 centimeters, that of the lower part from 20 to 30 centimeters, and the depth varies from 60 to 80 centimeters. The bottom and sides are lined with pieces of raffia stems, placed [138] [Fig. 80 appears here] [139] side by side with their rounded surfaces facing the interior of the pit. The nuts, which have been slightly boiled, are poured into this funnel, which serves as a mortar. The outer part is separated from the nut with a large wooden pestle. The kernels are discarded. The pulp is taken from the hole and tightly pressed between the hands to squeeze out the oil.

Near the funnel-shaped mortar dug in the ground, there is a bench made of two or four forked stakes, graduated in height, over which the natives place large sections of tree bark. The woman throws the pulp from which she has extracted the oil on this bench, spreads it out, and lights a small fire under the wide sections of bark, which serve as drains. Under the influence of the heat, part of the oil remaining in the pulp flows out slowly and is caught in the earthenware vessel placed at the lower end of the drain. Finally, whatever palm oil remains in the pulp is squeezed [401] out by the torsion method. For this purpose, the native has set up a large stationary bar, very strong, to which he attaches one end of a pressing apparatus made of young lianas and fine rattan plaited together. The pulp, still hot, is placed in this press and wrung very tightly to extract every last drop of oil.

250 415 The natives collect and keep the palm oil in large pots covered with banana leaves, in calabashes, or, if possible, in imported bottles. Big demijohns stripped of their protective covering are in special demand for this purpose.

000 We have mentioned above the chief uses the native makes of palm oil in preparing food and the important role it plays in the diet of these primitives. Later we shall have occasion to mention palm oil again when we discuss the role it plays in native body care.

263 A word now about stimulants. Food in general, particularly meat, is always very strongly seasoned with condiments.

The most widespread stimulant is pili-pili, red pepper. This pepper, the fruit of Capsicum minimum, which is rarely more than one to one and a half centimeters long, is extremely hot. It grows

[text continues on p. 103]

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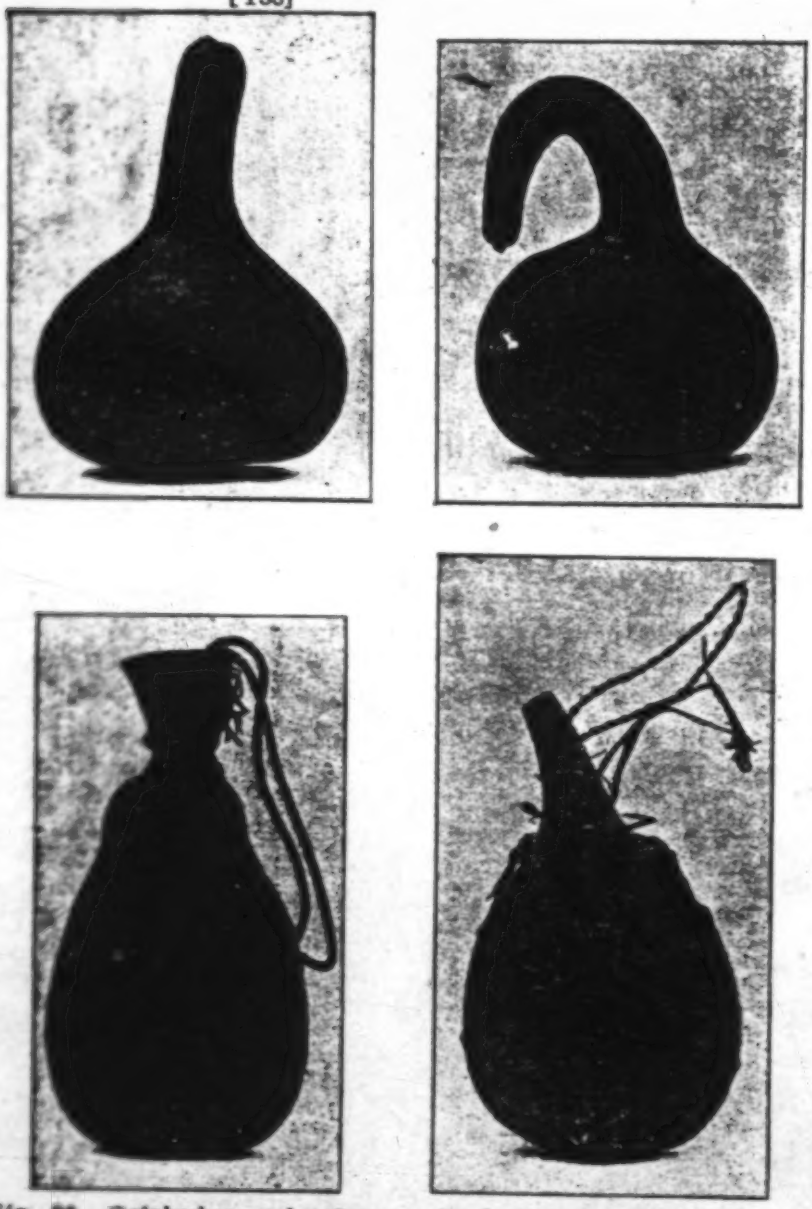

Fig. 80. Calabashes used as Receptacles for Water, Wine, Beer, and Oil.

264 The natives eat three meals a day, in the morning, toward noon, and at night after sunset.

The wife is never allowed to eat with her husband or to eat in the same group as he does.

[622] A chief always eats alone, far from the eyes of the common herd. [143]

Leftovers from the meals are ordinarily given to the women and children.

264 We did not find tables, spoons, or forks among any of the
●415 tribes we visited.

The food is put in small baskets of rattan or raffia splints,

[252]

Fig. 82. Native Outdoor Kitchen, Ipanga-Batitu Tribe.

plaited in openwork and lined with leaves on the bottom. Sometimes the plate is made of wood or baked clay.

Among the Bateke-Banfumungu, we collected some earthenware plates which look a great deal like European soup plates, but are less symmetrical in shape and deeper. Among the Baboma-Wadia-Batete, on the other hand, the plates look more like our flat plates. Among the Ipanga-Yaelima, basketwork plates are chiefly used, while in the Bena Dibele-Kole region one finds the pottery plate again, a sort of broadly flared,

264 spherical calotte, and also wooden plates. Sometimes also simple leaves are used as plates, unless the food is served in the cooking pots.

The whole meal is spread on the ground. [144]

The man squats on his mat and dips leisurely in the dishes with his hand, moving from one to another according to his taste.

The meal is always eaten in silence. Even when several friends eat together, they never talk during the meal.

After the meal the natives carefully wash their hands and teeth and rinse out their mouths several times.

Beverages

271 Water is the only beverage they drink at mealtime, and 415 they use it quite rarely. If they do not have a wooden or earthenware cup, they use part of a calabash or simply a leaf rolled into a little cone.

312 462 859 482

Fig. 83. Water Carrier.

Water usually comes from a spring near the village. The natives use river water only when it is quite clear. The women and children have the task of fetching water, a chore which is often quite hard. I visited many villages located along or near the river, whose source of drinking water was 20 to 30 minutes away.

At certain hours of the day and more especially in the morning as the sun first comes up, the women and children set out, a calabash or water jug balanced on their heads, to fetch the supply for the day.

271 Water is kept in large calabashes or earthenware jugs, 415 sheltered from the sun in a corner of the hut.

271
•415 The shape of these water jugs varies considerably according to the region, and some of them even seem to us to be characteristic of certain ethnic groups. [145]

Among the western Bateke and Banfumungu, the spherical shape with straight neck predominates.

Among the Maboma of Bokala-Wombali and the eastern Banfumungu, the shape is distinctly spherical, with a very small, funnel-like neck that is usually no more than one or two centimeters high. This form is entirely new. Fortunately, we were able to collect several specimens. The Bateke of the Stanley Pool region use a water jug that resembles the carafes imported from Europe. This shape is particularly common in the Leopoldville-Kinshasa region.

From Mushie to the region of the Basakata-Balesa, including the Wadia and Tumba, the body of the water jug consists of two parts joined at a sharp or slightly rounded edge. The bottom part is shaped like a spherical calotte; the upper part has the shape of a truncated cone. The decoration is very symmetrical. Lightly [53] marked parallel circles cover the conical part of the body and sometimes the neck. The latter is very long, usually wider at its base than at the top and slightly swollen in the middle. This interesting shape is also found, though more rarely, among the Mosengere. Among this tribe we encountered another form, no less interesting and very little known up to the present time. The chief characteristics of this form are the flat bottom, a cylindrical, more or less symmetrical body, rounded edges, and a neck in the shape of a wide funnel.

Among the Bobaie of the northeast, the Balesa-Batete, the Ipanga-Batitu, and the Bokala-Yaelima, the water jug has a spherical body and a straight neck. This same shape is also found among the Bankutu [Wankutshu] and Basongo-Meno of the Bena Dibele-Kole region.

Let us note, however, that in the region of the Ipanga-Yaelima, water jugs are relatively rare; the natives commonly use large calabashes, very often provided with a handle and a leg of rattan or bamboo.

271
515 Other than with meals, the natives drink water only to slake their thirst. Each time the porters come to a river, they make it a point to bathe in it and to refresh themselves. [146]

point to bathe in it and to refresh themselves. [146]

In addition to water which is the customary drink of all the tribes, we found the following beverages according to region: palm wine, malafu; sugarcane beer, masanga; and pombe, maize beer.

Fig. 84. Calabash for Palm Oil, also for Water.

Palm wine, the native malafu, although liked, is usually not very much in demand, especially when the native can replace it with masanga, sugar-cane beer. We found it among all the peoples, however, although actually only the Ipanga-Yaelima and the Basongo Meno-Bankutu drink it regularly.

In the other regions palm wine is made particularly in the villages near government posts or commercial establishments for the benefit of the Whites. These villages usually have a professional vintager.

The vintage comes from tapping the trees. The nsese palm, raffia, and the oil palm are chiefly used.

The native has three methods of climbing the trees for the vintage. The first is the one we described for gathering clusters

M
273 ordinarily does not stop until his tenth liter, and he is not the biggest drinker. Very often [149] the celebrations degenerate
[599] into bloody brawls. The drunken native flies into a rage over trifles, quarrels, and does not hesitate to use his weapons.

T
273 Among certain tribes, notably the Banfumungu, women
562 under no circumstances may be present at important festivities or participate in large-scale drinking. Pokei assures us that they are excluded because of their vindictive temperament. "We men," he said, "sometimes fight during these celebrations, but the next day haven't we forgotten our quarrels? The women would also fight. Do they know how to hold their tongues even when they haven't drunk masanga? The next day they would go on quarrelling. The husbands would step in. A village quarrel would follow every celebration! No, the women may not drink masanga."

It would be a mistake, however, to believe that the women strictly observe this prohibition. Oh no! More than one has her little drop of masanga inside her hut, and on occasion intentionally pours herself a little too much. Masanga is not taboo for them!

M
273 Sugar-cane beer is served in small earthenware cups, pieces
[415] of a calabash, or wooden cups.

East of Balesa-Batete territory, masanga seems to be unknown, or at least we did not find any, either among the Ipanga-Batitu or among the Bokala-Yaelima.

M
D
273 Among the Basongo-Meno and Bankutu of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, the natives chiefly consume palm wine.
415 They also make very inferior beer from maize or millet. To make this beer, the native crushes the maize or millet, steeps it in spring water, and lets it ferment in earthenware jars.

M
D
415 These jars are shaped more or less like the water jug with the spherical body, but have a very broad and higher neck. They are
531 usually quite large. The cups used for palm wine and beer by the Basongo-Meno and Bankutu are always carved out of wood. They are found in all shapes, from a simple, undecorated small keg to a splendidly fashioned human figurine. In certain villages, notably at Tipolo and Bakoba, we found cups made of buffalo horn, decorated [150] with carved designs. Cups shaped like horns are sometimes carved out of wood. These are usually larger and more carefully decorated.

1: Maes--112 E-5 (1913-1914) 1924 FO32 Mongo FO32
Dengese F016
Sakata F043

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The fact that these wooden cups are found in the Bena Dibele-Kole region is not without interest. Until the present time they had been reported only among the peoples in the region between the Kasai and the Sankuru, and certain authors even regarded them as characteristic of the Bakuba people. We shall say more on this subject later.

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If cannibalism ever existed, it has disappeared. When questioned about this, the natives as a rule vigorously deny any connection with this barbarous custom, but they do not hesitate to accuse their neighbors of the worst misdeeds. In our opinion, the peoples of the Bena Dibele-Kole region were once anthropophagous and practiced cannibalism until quite recently. It seems probable to us that on a favorable occasion they would not resist temptation even today.

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S
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Geophagy is better known. Children eat earth among all these peoples. Among the Basakata, Lesa, Mosengere, and Wadia, all the natives and especially the women are earth-eaters. Potter's earth and the clay from the nests of certain termites are very highly prized.

Fig. 86. Bobaie Children. One of them shows signs of geophagy.

The natives seem to eat earth as a delicacy and perhaps also as a medicament. To call it food would be an exaggeration, for the amount eaten is very small. [Ed., a passage is omitted from the last paragraph, page 150, to the end of the section, page 151.]

[151] Hemp and Tobacco

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The consequences of using hemp are more disastrous. This sad practice, which seems to have been quite widespread among certain peoples, is fortunately on the wane, thanks to the vigorous intervention of the government.

584 then does she acquire her own establishment. From that moment on she lives permanently with her husband-to-be.

She has come from her parents' home empty handed, without any utensils whatsoever. In her new dwelling she finds everything. Her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law give her what she needs: baskets, pots, gourds, mats, mortars, pestles, and even chickens.

It will be apparent from the preceding that there are no particular rites or ceremonies nor is any special attire worn.

584 595 By this time the bompɛ́ka is already considered a wife; [119] she has all the rights and duties of that status: cohabitation, household tasks, etc. Everything she produces or earns belongs to her husband. Her own family no longer has any rights to the fruits of her work. If, after the payment of the ikulá and before any further payment, [684] the husband discovers that there are relations between his fiancée and another man, the latter is considered an adulterer and is liable to the sanctions designed to check such infractions. The older the woman, the greater the indemnity, which may be as high as 5 to 10 rings (see Chapter VI, Article VII).

It is logically consistent with what we have described that the fiancé has no special name. Since he is actually a husband, that is what he is called (bǒme).

During this period the engaged pair get to know each other physically and morally (sexual relations, work, temperament, virtues, faults). A figurative expression is used to describe what happens -- bɛ́kángola mpoké, "they are trying out the pot." The explanation [415] for this saying is that before a new pot (mpoké) is used, it is placed on [252] a shelf above the fire and left there for several days, so that it will harden and become heat resistant. If it cracks it is not suitable for food preparation; if not, one can cook in it without fear. This process is called kángola mpoké, and the term has been transferred to the trial period of the newlyweds. Thus it is a sort of novitiate, and the English term which can be used to approximate this situation most closely is clearly "engagement," "engaged."

This first period can last several months. Meanwhile the husband seeks the valuables needed for the ndanga payment.